



## **The organization of the Region of Sønderjylland-Schleswig**

### Members and administration

The Region of Sønderjylland-Schleswig consists of the four municipalities of Aabenraa, Sønderborg, Haderslev and Tønder and the Region of South Denmark on the Danish side and the Districts of Schleswig-Flensburg and Nordfriesland and the City of Flensburg on the German side. The cooperation, which was formalized in 1997, is based on the wording of the agreement on Danish-German cooperation in the Region of Sønderjylland-Schleswig dated Sep. 16, 1997 in its current version of June 9, 2017.

The Regionskontor & Infocenter in Padborg (Denmark) is the joint secretariat and information office of the Region of Sønderjylland-Schleswig. The secretariat supports the Board and the Cultural Committee, which are the political decision-making bodies of the Region of Sønderjylland-Schleswig, as well as the various specialized groups and working groups. The secretariat is also responsible for the ongoing administration of the organization and the implementation of projects in the fields of culture, youth, school and sports, and it has provided consulting services to border commuters since 2004. The Regionskontor & Infocenter was formally integrated into the administration of the municipality of Aabenraa in 2012.

The Board is the supreme decision-making body of the Region of Sønderjylland-Schleswig. It consists of policymakers from the Region of Sønderjylland-Schleswig and takes decisions about the Region's work. The Board elects a chair and a deputy chair every two years — the Danish and the German side alternate. The representatives of the contractual partners are voting members of the Board. The representatives of the Danish minority in Germany and the German minority in Denmark are not entitled to vote on budget matters. The representative of the Schleswig-Holstein federal state government has no vote whatsoever.

The Cultural Committee of Sønderjylland-Schleswig concentrates mainly on language and culture as well as youth and voluntary work in associations. It also states its positions on a range of matters of cultural policy inasmuch as they have cross-border relevance. The Labour Market Committee and the Committee of Borderregional Development were founded in 2017. Each of them works in their own respective fields. In addition, it is possible to set up ad-hoc committees if necessary.

### Specialized groups, working groups, networking groups

The specialized groups deal with various specific topics relevant to Danish-German cooperation in the border region. The groups exchange experiences and ideas and develop project concepts. The members of the specialized groups normally come from the partner administrations or relevant bodies and associations. Specialized groups currently exist for culture, youth and school (specialized contact group), language and intercultural understanding, and sports (SpoReg).

Besides the work of the specialized groups, other specific areas are dealt with by working groups that are supported by the administrative office (Regionskontor & Infocenter). The purpose of the working groups is to exchange experiences, develop and maintain networks, plan actual initiatives



and generally support cross-border cooperation in the Region of Sønderjylland-Schleswig. The Danish-German Library Forum and the sickness pay group are examples of the working groups.

In addition, the Regionskontor & Infocenter is also involved in various networking groups that deal with topics within the cross-border cooperation. Examples are the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), the Dialogue Forum North und the Association of Border Crossers.

#### Ongoing project activities

Since the beginning of the cooperation, the secretariat has engaged in various project-based activities. It supervises initiatives as they evolve into real projects – these may be activities funded out of its own budget or via the Interreg A program or by other third parties. The Infocenter itself actually started out as an Interreg project between 2004 and 2007. In the field of culture, the Regionskontor & Infocenter was in charge of various umbrella projects that facilitated cross-border projects in the fields of culture, youth, school and sports. During the Interreg project KursKultur (2015-2019), the Regionskontor & Infocenter for the first time took the role as lead partner. This is being continued during the ongoing project KursKultur 2.0.

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